

APRIL

at the

CALIFORNIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

APRIL MEETINGS (FOR MEMBERS ONLY)

DATES: Wednesday evening April 15 and
Thursday evening, April 16
TIME: 8:00 p.m.
PLACE: May Treat Morrison Auditorium
SPEAKER: Douglas Mazonowicz
SUBJECT: "THE SAHARA'S SECRET ART
GALLERY"

Giraffes in the Sahara? Hippos, elephants and cattle? Yes — they can be seen today — by the thousands — painted on the rocky walls of a strangely eroded mass of sandstone in the middle of the great Sahara Desert.

This wilderness of rock and sand is called Tassili n'Ajjer — plateau of rivers — and so it was 6,000 years ago before a dramatic change in climate eliminated forest, rivers, men and animals and left behind on the walls of their crude homes, paintings that tell a strange story of the once green Sahara.

The story, illustrated with color slides, will be told by Douglas Mazonowicz, English free-lance artist, writer and lecturer who made a previous, memorable appearance at the Academy in 1968 when he spoke of the cave paintings of France and Spain, as well as the Sahara.

Mr. Mazonowicz has made three expeditions to the Tassili area, photographing, copying and recording many of the African paintings. This material has been utilized, together with his knowledge of the silkscreen process, to make the hand-printed, actual size copies that are featured in the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition currently displayed at the Academy and coinciding with his appearance, fortunately.

Research Associate of the Carnegie Museum, Mr. Mazonowicz has devoted himself to copying and recording the world's prehistoric paintings. During his extended stay in the United States, he hopes to study the early Indian rock art of Texas and other regions.

As indicated previously, there will be two separate

meetings April 15 and April 16 at 8:00 p.m. We urge the membership to utilize their guest cards and introduce friends to the Academy since the two sessions will afford plenty of space (we hope!). Your 1970 membership card is your admission. Two ways of ingress are available: Cowell Hall, Main Entrance; and the rear Planetarium entrance off Middle Drive.

The May membership meetings are scheduled for Wednesday, May 13 and Thursday, May 14.

MORRISON PLANETARIUM

"THE NEAREST STAR" continues in the Theatre of the Stars through April 26. That star, of course, is the sun — that object 93 million miles away without which we could not exist. With its light, its energy, its life-giving qualities, it is more important than any other celestial body. A fine astronomy show with many effects, "THE NEAREST STAR" includes ideas and information that will boggle the imagination.

Performances daily at 2:00 with evening shows, Wednesday through Sunday, at 8:30. Extra matinees, Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, at 3:30. Admission: \$1.00 for adults, with half-price for children under 16, armed services personnel, and students with student body card.

Beginning April 30: "ALL ABOUT CALENDARS".

SPECIAL EXHIBITS

"17TH ANNUAL SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA SCIENCE FAIR" will be open to the public Saturday, April 11 through Wednesday, April 15. Come and be delightfully intimidated by the perceptive science projects created by Bay Area youngsters. From ten in the morning until five in the afternoon.

"ROCK PAINTINGS OF TASSILI, SAHARA" by Douglas Mazonowicz, April 11 through May 2. Fifteen reproductions of cave paintings located in the Tassili Plateau. Domestic, hunting and battle scenes interspersed with vaguely unpleasant paintings of ancient ceremonies — all excitingly reproduced.

NEWS and NOTES

BY NOW, Bay Area members are aware that the Golden Gate Park Centennial will be celebrated April 4 through October 31 described as a "cultural extravaganza to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the world-famous park." On opening day there is a planned two-mile parade featuring some 10,000 marchers from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., and tentatively planned is an Arabian

Horse Show at Peter Bercut Field at 2:00 in the afternoon followed by a special stage program at the Music Concourse from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Under the aegis of the San Francisco Garden Club, the Hall of Flowers will feature "The Sand Dune Miracle — A Toast to John McLaren" and a Spring Flower Show April 24 through 26, ten to five daily.

KARL SWITAK, Aquatic Biologist (Herpetologist) for Steinhart Aquarium, has recently returned from a journey around the world that would be any natural historian's dream. For seven months he was on an official leave of absence from the CAS, traveling in company with a good friend, Chris Banis, the purpose being to observe and photograph reptiles in their natural habitat and subsequently to apply what was learned in maintaining live animals in the artificial atmosphere of Steinhart. Also, he planned, when possible, to collect live specimens and ship them air freight to San Francisco.

Much of Europe was covered initially by Land-rover and eventually, when they reached Ghana, they had some 12,000 road miles under their belt — if that can be considered the proper figure of speech. From there they flew to Johannesburg and motored some 2,000 in that area. Then it was Pakistan, India, Thailand, Singapore, Australia, New Caledonia, Fiji, Hawaii and home to San Francisco, and there was photographing, recording and collecting all along the way. All in all, Karl shipped almost 200 specimens, most of them rarities never before on display in Steinhart, in special boxes that he personally constructed. From West Africa came amphibians that would be any aquarium's reason to boast. From Australia came probably the largest collection of Australian reptiles to be found anywhere except "down under" itself. (Notable is a snake known as a Taipan — one of the deadliest on earth).

They had untoward adventures all along the way: An unusually severe rainstorm in the Sahara found them inexorably stuck in the mud. After the water receded, only ten hours of shoveling plus the assistance of local Arabian nomads got them out. A swim in Lake Baringo, Kenya, was abandoned in haste when a 12-foot crocodile surprised them by edging in closer. Malaria laid Karl low in Senegal but the ministrations of an able nurse in the U.S. Embassy in Dakar got him back on his feet so that the journey could continue.

Steinhart Aquarium is considerably richer for Karl and his friend's peregrinations. Come see for yourself. These new inhabitants can be found throughout the area adjacent to the alligator swamp.

DURING APRIL AND MAY, the sales desks in Cowell Hall will feature books (most of them paperbacks and most of them recent) devoted to the ecological crisis — what it is, how we managed to arrive at this miserable state, and what we individually can do about it. They are informative, up-to-date, and low in price and we urge you to examine them and share them with interested friends. Remember, you — as a member — get ten per cent off on such purchases. Take advantage of it.

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